

BOOK REVIEW

Geoscientific Writing (A guide to language and composition style)

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Srinivasa Rao Koneru, Geoscientific Writing (A Guide to Language and Composition Styles), Geological Society of India, Memoir 58, 2004, p. xx+270. Price: India - Rs. 250; other countries - US\$ 25. Geological Society of India, P.B. No. 1922, Gavipuram, Bangalore - 560 019, India.

Writing skills come naturally to a gifted few, but through training it can be developed in others. Ability to express lucidly, particularly in scientific writing, can be achieved with proper training, that helps the writer in choosing the subject matter, organizing the ideas and correcting grammar. At this juncture I will be failing in my duties if I do not recall the efforts made by the late Prof. P.G. Cooray of Sri Lanka in this regard. He conducted several workshops under the aegis of AGID to inculcate the spirit of writing in the minds of young research scholars of earth science. He also brought out a publication, which unfortunately did not occupy the shelves of many libraries.

The present memoir, brought out by the Geological Society of India and authored by Srinivasa Rao Koneru is a welcome endeavour. The memoir is published at a time when young earth scientists are finding it difficult to effectively communicate with others. The present publication is sure to benefit the young geoscientist in the art of communication and author needs to be complimented for contemplating such a compendium.

The memoir has two parts: the first part has seven

chapters and the second part consists of five chapters. The emphasis in Part I (element of language) is focused on the effective use of language in improving the style of writing. The language style should be clear in addition to being simple, precise and to the point. The hallmarks of good language style for scientific writing are clarity, conciseness and coherence. In addition, both punctuation and the use of mechanical devices are also considered part of the language elements, since they impart new or additional sense to sentences and words respectively. Like any other language, English has its share of rules to regulate its use. A separate chapter has been dedicated to it, highlighting the need for critical understanding of the rules in order to distinguish required rules and those that are optional.

Part II of the memoir (elements of composition) enumerates the method of composing a scientific document. Exhaustive guidelines are given as to how to gather the material and arrange it in a logical order of presentation. The memoir contains three useful appendices, which aid in the choice of wording and spelling. This timely and worthy publication should be read by all who are seriously involved in scientific research and communication. It should find a place in the shelves of libraries of all universities and research institutions. The earth science community should be grateful to the author as well as to the Geological Society of India for publishing the memoir.

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